7 Extraordinary Artworks to Seek Out at the Newly Returned ADAA Art Show in New York

Sarah Cascone, 05 November 2021

Robert Kobayashi, *Glass Cup* (1998). Courtesy of Susan Inglett Gallery, New York.

Booth: Susan Inglett Gallery, New York
What It Costs: $40,000

Why It's Special: Born in Hawaii in 1920, Robert Kobayashi began studying art after serving in the military in World War II, taking classes at the Honolulu Academy of Art and the Brooklyn Museum School of Art. When he moved to New York, Kobayashi was initially part of the Abstract Expressionist scene, but soon began developing his own unique practice in a more figurative vein, inspired by a Pointillist exhibition he saw at the Art Institute of Chicago during a break in basic training.

By day a registrar at the Museum of Modern Art—where his work is in the collection—Kobayashi for four decades also operated his own gallery in a tenement building he purchased on the Lower East Side. Named Moe's Meat Market, after the former ground-floor tenant, it served as both studio and exhibition space for his "clouage" paintings, made from scavenged cans (sometimes collected by local children) and pressed tin ceilings ripped out of neighborhood buildings and discarded.

Inglett recently began working with the artist's estate, having met Kobayashi's widow, Kate Keller, at an opening for gallery artist Beverly Semmes, who once rented studio space in the couple's building. (Kobayashi died in2015.) The ADAA presentation follows a September 2020 solo show at the gallery, and saw strong interest on opening night, with three of the eight available works finding new homes.

"This is the first time that most folks have seen his work," Inglett told Artnet News. "It fell through the cracks because he had no interest in selling his work commercially.… He wasn't untrained, but it has this outsider feel to it."

—Sarah Cascone